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SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HISTORY AND OBJECTS



SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

HISTORY AND OBJECTS



PRINTED for THE SOCIETY by Gedney
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



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1891.

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SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

THE CITIZENS of the United States are responsible for the greatest trust ever confided to a political society. If justice, good faith, honor, gratitude and all the other qualities which ennoble the character of a nation and fulfil the ends of government be the fruits of our establishments, the cause of Liberty will acquire a dignity and lustre which it has never yet enjoyed; and an example will be set which cannot but have the most favorable influence on the rights of Mankind.

JAMES MADISON, 1783.

THE SOCIETY OF SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION enables the man of the North and the man of the South to stand on the same platform. We shall have an electric current of fraternal interest reaching from the St. Lawrence to the Rio Grande.

ADMIRAL PORTER, 1890.



THE SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION is purely patriotic in its purposes. Through its agency representative men of all parties and from every section, the descendants of the patriots who achieved independence for our Nation, are brought together in sympathetic and friendly association for the promotion of objects specifically named in its Constitution, as follows:—

(1) *To perpetuate the memory and the spirit of the men who achieved American Independence, by the encouragement of historical research in relation to the Revolution and the publication of its results, the preservation of documents and relics and of the records of the individual services of Revolutionary soldiers and patriots, and the promotion of celebrations of all patriotic anniversaries.*

(2) *To carry out the injunction of Washington in his farewell address to the American people:—“To promote, as an object of*

VIII SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge,'—thus developing an enlightened public opinion and affording to young and old such advantages as shall develop in them the largest capacity for performing the duties of American citizens.

(3) To cherish, maintain, and extend the institutions of American freedom, to foster true patriotism and love of country, and to aid in securing for mankind all the blessings of liberty.

The Society is National in its scope and is governed in matters of general importance by a board of officers elected at its annual convention. It is made up of the following State Societies, in every respect co-equal in rank:—

LIST OF SOCIETIES.

JANUARY, 1891.

NAME.	PRESIDENT.
NATIONAL SOCIETY, . . .	Dr. William Seward Webb, of Vermont, President General.
CALIFORNIA, . . .	Col. A. S. Hubbard.
NEW JERSEY, . . .	Hon. John Whitehead.
CONNECTICUT, . . .	Jonathan Trumbull.
VERMONT, . . .	Hon. Redfield Proctor.
SOUTH CAROLINA, . . .	Hon. J. P. Richardson.
MASSACHUSETTS, . . .	Hon. Charles H. Saunders.
MARYLAND, . . .	Gen. Bradley T. Johnson.
OHIO, . . .	H. V. Axline.
KENTUCKY, . . .	Hon. H. W. Bruce.
MISSOURI, . . .	Josiah Fogg.
TENNESSEE, . . .	Rev. D. C. Kelley, D. D.
MINNESOTA, . . .	Hon. Albert Edgerton.
ARKANSAS, . . .	Col. Samuel W. Williams.
WISCONSIN, . . .	Don J. Whittemore.
INDIANA, . . .	Hon. William E. Niblack.
MICHIGAN, . . .	Hon. H. B. Ledyard.
DELWARE, . . .	Hon. Thomas F. Bayard.
WEST VIRGINIA, . . .	Hon. John J. Jacob.
RHODE ISLAND, . . .	John Nicholas Brown.
ILLINOIS, . . .	Judge Henry M. Shepard.
NEW YORK, . . .	Hon. Chauncey M. Depew.
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, . . .	Admiral David D. Porter.
NEBRASKA, . . .	Champion S. Chase.
ALABAMA, . . .	Capt. Joseph Forney Johnston.
LOUISIANA, . . .	Hon. William H. Jack.
VIRGINIA, . . .	Hon. William Wirt Henry.

The California Society, which stands at the head of the list, is (with the exception of the SOCIETY OF THE CINCINNATI;

founded May 13, 1783, and the AMERICAN REVOLUTION SOCIETY, or SEVENTY-SIX ASSOCIATION, composed of officers and soldiers, founded in the South in 1784, which existed for many years, but long ago became extinct) the first patriotic organization ever founded in America, with membership based upon service in the cause of American Independence. It came into existence on the Fourth of July, 1876, when citizens of San Francisco, about forty in number, descendants of the patriots of the Revolution, having marched together in the great procession which was the most striking feature of California's celebration of the Centennial Anniversary of Independence, met to organize the Society of SONS OF REVOLUTIONARY Sires.* The objects of the society then founded were defined in a circular letter, sent out in August, in the following terms:

"To unite the descendants of Revolutionary patriots and perpetuate the memory of those who took part in the American Revolution, and maintained the independence of the United States of America; to organize auxiliaries, co-equal branches and representative bodies, at such time and place as the directors may determine."

The desire of the founders of the new society to extend its work beyond the boundaries of California met with much encouragement. Honorary membership was accepted by Ex-Presidents Grant and Hayes and other public men throughout the country, and before the close of 1876, Vice Presidents had been appointed in Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Illinois, Iowa and the District of Columbia,† with authority to found branch societies, and these efforts were continuous up to 1883. It is not certain that any such branches were ever formed, but

* On June 29th (1876) the following request was published in the news columns of the "Alta": "The descendants of the Revolutionary patriots are requested to meet at the headquarters of the Grand Marshal, at No. 212 Kearney street, at 8 o'clock this evening, for the purpose of making arrangements to participate in the celebration." In response to the call between forty and fifty citizens assembled. General N. M. Winn presided, and Dr. E. L. Willard was chosen secretary. All present signed the roll. After the parade the organization marched to the Palace Hotel and partook of refreshments. It was at this meeting that they formally organized under the title of "Sons of Revolutionary Sires" (July 4th, 1876). Ten days later the new organization adopted a constitution and by-laws, and has since been a permanent society in this city.

From the "Alta California," May 5th, 1889.

† Mr. N. T. E. Chandler, of the U. S. Patent Office, Vice President for the District of Columbia, died in 1889, and the papers relating to the history of his work cannot be found.

the California Society maintained a continuous existence until 1889, when it changed its name in order to participate in the organization of the NATIONAL SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, and is still one of the strong organizations in the federation.

In 1876 Mr. John Austin Stevens, of New York, proposed the organization of a society, to be called "SONS OF THE REVOLUTION," and to be composed of descendants of officers and soldiers of the Revolutionary Army. No meetings appear to have been held under this plan. The New York society of the SONS OF THE REVOLUTION was formally established December 31, 1883. In 1888 some of its members founded a similar society in Philadelphia, and in March and April, 1889, similar organizations were formed in thirteen other States. Through some unfortunate misunderstanding the society in New York failed to participate in the movement now begun for the establishment of a National organization, although it was the desire of the other States that New York should take the lead. The technical difficulty seems to have been the unwillingness of the other States to recognize the supposed claim of the New York society to be the central and sole source of authority.

On the Anniversary day, April 30, 1889, upon the invitation of the New Jersey Society, delegates from fourteen States met in the historic "Long Room" of Fraunces's Tavern, in New York, the apartment in which Washington took leave of his Generals at the close of the Revolution, and formed an organization of National scope under the name of THE SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, and under the Constitution then adopted the several State societies already mentioned have become federated.

The District of Columbia Society, SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, was organized April 11, 1890, by Mr. William O. McDowell, of New Jersey, at that time Vice President General of the National Society. Its career, though short, has been prosperous, and it is already one of the largest and strongest of the associations of descendants of the patriots of the Revolution.

In 1890 the New York Society abandoned its plan of auxiliary branches, and joined with that in Pennsylvania to form a general or National Society, under the name of SONS OF THE

REVOLUTION. This action removed all tangible obstacles to the union of all the State societies in one National organization. The question of priority of organization is not one of the highest importance, for all will concede that the present widespread interest is largely the outgrowth of the part which the SONS OF THE REVOLUTION in New York have taken in the movement which began in 1876 in both San Francisco and New York, which took tangible form in San Francisco in 1876 and in New York in 1883, and which culminated in 1889 in a general organization of State societies throughout the whole Union.

Prior to the organization of the Society of the SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION in Washington City, a society of the SONS OF THE REVOLUTION was in existence. This was organized April 3, 1890, under the Presidency of the Hon. John Lee Carroll, and with a very distinguished membership. On April 3, 1890, this society subscribed to the Constitution of the SONS OF THE REVOLUTION, prepared by the Representatives of the New York and Pennsylvania Societies.

The National Society of the DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION was organized in Washington City, October 11, 1890, and has already a large membership, which is extending over the entire country. Its objects are identical with those of the two other societies already referred to, though its organization and eligibility requirements are somewhat different.

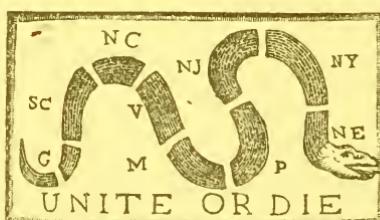
Serious work has already been begun by all the societies. Members of the old New York Society did noble service in providing for the completion of the pedestal of the Bartholdi Statue of Liberty, in New York Harbor; and it was to its members that the Centennial Celebration of 1889 owed its origin, and largely its success. It also aided materially in the erection of a monument to Nathan Hale. The State societies are planning for the systematic celebration of local events of historic interest; Massachusetts has celebrated the anniversary of "Lexington," and New Jersey those of "Red Bank," "Trenton" and "Springfield," and Tennessee that of "King's Mountain." Our National Society has asked the interest of the Congress to prevent the desecration of the National flag by its use for advertising purposes, and is endeavoring to encourage the playing of National airs by all

bands on National anniversaries. All the societies are urging the more general display of the National flag. The California Society and our own set the example of a patriotic gathering on July 4, 1890; an example afterwards strengthened by the issue of an official circular from the National Society.

Much still remains to be done in the way of patriotic endeavor. The localities of historic events and the birthplaces and graves of Revolutionary heroes are to be identified and marked by suitable monuments. Revolutionary documents and records, especially the unpublished rolls of the soldiers, and the stories of individual service are to be brought to light, indexed and printed. The Pennsylvania Society, SONS OF THE REVOLUTION, has begun serious work in the preservation of historical documents. The Michigan Society, S. A. R., passed a resolution April 24, 1890, urging the publication of the records of the Army of the Revolution, and Col. Hubbard, the President of the California Society, wrote to the President of the National Society, February 18, 1890, as follows:—

"I hope that some method will be formulated whereby the United States Government will undertake to gather, compile and publish, from its archives, and the archives of the thirteen original States, the record of every officer, soldier and sailor who participated in the war of 1776, and that the work thus published will be recognized as the American Domesday Book. The National Society of Sons of the American Revolution should be more than an auxiliary in the production of such a work."

A wholesome and intelligent interest in the principles and acts of the Revolution may well be encouraged throughout the country. It is believed that whenever any question of real importance is to be considered, unanimity of sentiment and harmony of action will always be found among the various organizations of the descendants of the patriots of 1776.



Constitution and By-Laws.

There are three stages in the history of the North American Revolution—the first of which may be considered as beginning with the order of the British Council for enforcing the acts of trade in 1760, and as having reached its crisis at the meeting of the first Congress, fourteen years after, at Philadelphia. It was a struggle for the preservation and recovery of the rights and liberties of the British Colonies. It terminated in a civil war, the character and object of which were changed by the Declaration of Independence.

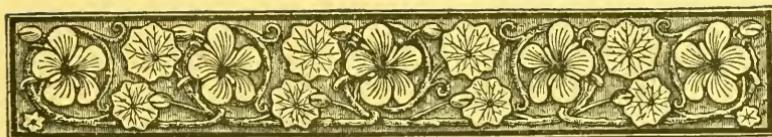
The second stage is that of the War of Independence, usually so-called—but it began fifteen months before the Declaration, and was itself the immediate cause and not the effect of that event. It closed by the preliminary Treaty of Peace concluded at Paris, on the 30th of November, 1782.

The third is the formation of the Anglo-American People and Nation of North America. This event was completed by the meeting of the first Congress of the United States, under their present Constitution, on the Fourth of March, 1789.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, 1836.

There is nothing more common than to confound the terms of AMERICAN REVOLUTION with those of THE LATE AMERICAN WAR. The American War is over, but this is far from being the case with the American Revolution. On the contrary nothing but the first act of the great drama is closed. It remains yet to establish and perfect our new forms of government, and to prepare the principles, morals and manners of our citizens for these forms of government, after they are established and brought to perfection.

BENJAMIN RUSH, 1787.



CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

NAME.



THE name of this Society shall be THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

ARTICLE II.

OBJECTS.

The objects of the Society shall be:

To perpetuate the memory and the spirit of the men who achieved American Independence, by the encouragement of historical research in relation to the Revolution and the publication of its results, the preservation of documents and relics and of the records of the individual services of Revolutionary soldiers and patriots, and the promotion of celebrations of all patriotic anniversaries.

To carry out the injunction of Washington in his farewell address to the American people:—"To promote, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge,"—thus developing an enlightened public opinion and affording to young and old such advantages as shall develop in them the largest capacity for performing the duties of American citizens.

Historical
Research
and
Celebrations.

Promotion
of National
Institutions.

Promotion
of
Patriotism.

To cherish, maintain, and extend the institutions of American freedom, to foster true patriotism and love of country, and to aid in securing for mankind all the blessings of liberty.

ARTICLE III.

MEMBERSHIP.

Eligibility.

I. Any man is eligible for membership who is of the age of twenty-one years, and who is descended from an ancestor who, with unfailing loyalty, rendered material aid to the cause of American Independence as a soldier or a seaman, or a civil officer in one of the several Colonies or States or of the United Colonies or States, or as a recognized patriot, provided that the applicant shall be acceptable to the Society.

Ancestry Records
of
Women.

II. For the purpose of perfecting the records of Revolutionary patriots and their descendants, any woman of Revolutionary ancestry may file with the Registrar a record, in duplicate, of her ancestors' services and of her line of descent, one copy of which shall be deposited among the archives of the National Society.

Honorary
Members.

III. Any person may be eligible for honorary membership, subject to the limitations as to age and descent established in the case of active members.

Members
of the
National Society.

IV. All members of the National Society are our comrades and brothers, and when within the borders of our jurisdiction will be welcome to our meetings and to assist in our celebrations and work.

ARTICLE IV.

OFFICERS AND MANAGERS.

Officers
and
Managers.

I. The officers of the Society shall be a President, one or more Vice Presidents, two Secretaries, a Treasurer, a Registrar, an Assistant Registrar, a Historian, and such others as may be deemed necessary, who shall be elected by a vote of the majority of the members present at the annual meeting of the Society, and who shall hold office for one year, or until their successors shall be elected, and who, with thirteen other members, shall constitute the Board of Management.

II. Delegates to the Congress of the Society shall be elected at each annual meeting, in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution of the General Society.

Delegates to the Congress.

III. An Executive Committee of five, of which the President of the Society shall be the Chairman, which may be elected by the Board of Management from their number, shall, in the interim between the meetings of the Board, transact such business as shall be delegated to it by the Board of Management.

Executive Committee.

ARTICLE V.

FEES AND DUES.

I. The initiation fee, including dues for the first year, shall be five (\$5) dollars; the annual dues three (\$3) dollars; or the payment at one time of fifty (\$50) dollars shall constitute a life member, with exemption from payment of dues thereafter.

Amount.

II. The annual dues shall be payable on the first day of April in each year.

Time of Payment.

III. A member who shall remain in arrears for dues for three months after notice of his indebtedness has been sent him, may be dropped from the rolls by the Board of Management.

Arrearages.

IV. The initiation fees and all payments for dues and life memberships shall be used by the Board of Management for the purpose of paying the dues, of twenty-five cents for each active member, to the National Society, of publishing such documents as they may deem advisable, of paying the running expenses, and for such special purposes as may be ordered by a vote of two-thirds of the Board of Management.

Application of Funds.

ARTICLE VI.

MEETINGS AND ELECTIONS.

I. The Annual Meeting for election of officers and transaction of business shall be held at noon on the twenty-second day of February, the anniversary of the birth of George Washington, in every year, except when that date shall fall on Sunday, in which case the meeting shall be held on the following day.

Annual Meeting.

Special Meetings.

II. Special meetings may be called by the President or Board of Management at any time for business purposes or for the purpose of celebrating events of the Revolution or other patriotic events, or devising means for the prosecution of patriotic work. The President shall call a special meeting whenever requested in writing so to do by five or more members.

III. General business may be transacted at any special meeting.

IV. Thirteen members shall constitute a quorum at all meetings, except that three members shall be a quorum of the Executive Committee.

Election of Officers.

V. All nominations for officers shall be made from the floor and not by committee, and all elections to office shall be by ballot. The persons receiving the majority of all the votes cast shall be declared elected, and shall hold office for the ensuing term and until their successors shall be elected.

ARTICLE VII.

AMENDMENTS.

Proposal of Amendments.

Amendments to this Constitution may be offered at any meeting of the Society, but shall not be acted on until the next meeting. A copy of every proposed amendment shall be sent to each member, with a notice of the meeting at which the same is to be acted on, at least one week prior to said meeting.

Action on Amendments.

A vote of two-thirds of those present shall be necessary to the adoption of any amendment.



BY-LAWS.

SECTION I.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS.

MEMBERS shall be elected as follows: Candidates may send their applications together with documents and other proofs of qualification for membership,* to the Secretary; and, upon a favorable report from the Board of Management, and upon payment of the initiation fee, shall become members of the Society.

Election
to
Membership.

SECTION II.

THE PRESIDENT.

The President, or in his absence the Vice President, or in his absence a Chairman, *pro tempore*, shall preside at all meetings of the Society and Board of Management, and have a casting vote. He shall exercise the usual functions of a presiding officer, and shall enforce a strict observance of the Constitution and By-Laws and of the regulations and rules of the Society.

Presiding
Officer.

* It is required that all applications shall be made upon the standard form of APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP issued by authority of the Executive Committee, N. S., S. A. R., which provides for :

1. A statement of the services of the ancestor of the applicant in aid of the establishment of American Independence.
2. A detailed statement of the intermediate generations of his pedigree, with full names of maternal and paternal ancestors in each generation, and, if possible, dates and places of birth and death, and places of residence.
3. A recommendation of the candidate by a member of the Society.
4. An affidavit by the applicant in support of the statements contained in his application. The affidavit has not as yet been required by this Society.

SECTION III.

THE SECRETARY.

General Duties. The Secretary shall conduct the general correspondence of the Society and such other matters as may be directed by the Society. He shall have charge of the seal, certificate of incorporation, by-laws and records of the Society, and, together with the presiding officer, shall certify all acts of the Society.

Records. He shall keep fair and accurate records of all the proceedings and orders of the Society; and shall give notice to the several officers of all votes, orders, resolves, and proceedings of the Society affecting them or appertaining to their respective duties.

Notices of Elections and Meetings. He shall notify all members of their election, and shall, under the direction of the President or Vice President, give due notice of the time and place of all meetings of the Society, and attend the same.

SECTION IV.

THE TREASURER.

Disposition of Funds. The Treasurer shall collect and keep the funds and securities of the Society; they shall be deposited in some bank or saving institute in this District, to the credit of THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SOCIETY OF THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION, and shall be drawn thence on the check of the Treasurer, for the purposes of the Society only. Out of these funds he shall pay such sums only as may be ordered by the Society, or by the Board of Management.

Accounts and Audits. He shall keep a true account of his receipts and payments, and, at each annual meeting, render the same to the Society, when a committee shall be appointed to audit his accounts.

Balances. If, from the annual report of the Treasurer, there shall appear to be a balance against the Treasurer, no appropriation of money shall be made for any object but the necessary current expenses of the Society until such balance shall be paid.

SECTION V.

THE REGISTRAR.

The Registrar shall keep a roll of members, and in his hands shall be lodged all the proofs of membership-qualification, and all the historical and genealogical papers, manuscript or other, of which the Society may become possessed; and, under the direction of the Board of Management shall keep copies of such similar documents as the owners thereof may not be willing to leave permanently in the keeping of the Society. He shall verify all statements of the revolutionary services of ancestors that may be made in the applications for membership, and make report to the Board of Managers.

The Registrar shall, if practicable, be some person connected with the Smithsonian Institution.

Membership Roll.

Historical Documents.

SECTION VI.

THE HISTORIAN.

The Historian shall keep the records of the historical and commemorative meetings of the Society, and shall supervise the preparation and printing of all its historical publications, other than those of the membership rolls.

He shall submit at each annual meeting a list of the members who may have died during the year, accompanied by biographical memoirs.

Historical Records.

Necrology.

SECTION VII.

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT.

The Board of Management shall consist of at least twenty-one members, namely, the President, Vice Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurer, Registrar, and Historian, *ex-officio*, and thirteen others, elected as provided by the Constitution.

They shall judge of the qualifications of the candidates for admission to the Society, and elect the same. They shall have

Constitution.

Duties.

charge of all special meetings of the Society, and shall, through the Secretary, call special meetings at any time, upon the written request of five members of the Society, and at such other times as they see fit. They shall recommend plans for promoting the objects of the Society, shall digest and prepare business, and shall authorize the disbursement and expenditure of unappropriated money in the treasury for the payment of current expenses of the Society. They shall generally superintend the interests of the Society, and execute all such duties as may be committed to them by the Society.

Annual Report.

At each annual meeting of the Society the Board shall make a general report.

Quorum.

At all meetings of the Board of Management, five or more shall be sufficient for the transaction of business.

Ayes and Nays.

Ayes and nays shall be called at any meeting of the Society upon the demand of five members.

SECTION VIII.

AMENDMENTS.

Proposal of Amendments.

Action.

No alteration of the by-laws of the Society shall be made unless such alteration shall have been openly proposed at a previous meeting and entered in the minutes with the name of the member proposing the same, and shall be adopted by a majority of the members present at a meeting of the Society.





THE INSIGNIA.

The Cross of THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION is of silver, with four arms and eight points, similar in size and appearance to the Chevalier's cross of the Legion of Honor of France. The arms are of white enamel, the center a gold medallion with a bust of Washington, in profile, within a ribbon of blue enamel on which in gold letters is the legend:—

LIBERTAS ET PATRIA,

the motto of the order. A laurel wreath in green enamel encircles the medallion, midway between it and the points of the cross. The reverse is like the obverse, except that the medallion bears the figure of a Continental soldier, and is surrounded by a ribbon of blue enamel upon which are inscribed in letters of gold the words:—

SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

The cross is surmounted by an eagle in gold or silver.

The rosette is of silk ribbon, blue and white, and is to be worn in the upper left button hole of the coat, on all occasions and at will, except when the cross is in use.

Major Goldsmith Bernard West, of Alabama, by whom the insignia were designed, explains their significance as follows:—

“ The cross of four arms and eight points, enameled in white, is drawn from the cross of the ancient chivalric order of St. Louis of France; but the monarchical lilies which were placed between the arms have been left out. In their place we surround them with the laurel wreath of Republican victory. There are two good reasons for selecting the form of the Cross of St. Louis as the ground-work for our decoration. It was the Grand Master of that Order, Louis XVI., who had lent to America that aid she so badly needed to win the fight for National Independence; and nearly all of the gallant French

officers, who personally fought with and for the Colonies were Chevaliers of the Order. It is intended as a recognition of them and their services, and as a compliment to their country and their descendants that we propose, in some part, the adoption of the form of the historic Cross of St. Louis.

"The medallion in gold, which forms the centre of the cross on its obverse side, and bears the bust in profile of Washington, appears too appropriate to demand explanation or argument. The legend surrounding it in letters of gold on a ribbon of blue enamel, '*Libertas et Patria*,' appears at once in keeping with the general design and in harmony with the principles and purposes of the Order.

"The reverse side of the cross is like the obverse, except that the reverse bears on the gold medallion the figure of a 'Minute-Man,' a type of those old Continental Soldiers who

*Left their ploughshares in the mould,
Their flocks and herds without a fold,*

and rushed to the defense of liberty and country at the first sound of the gun, the echo of which was heard around the world,—one of the heroes and martyrs of Valley Forge.

"The decoration is to be suspended from the left breast or collar by a blue ribbon with white edges. Blue and white were the colors of the uniform of Washington's staff."





THE OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY.

[From the address by REV. ALEXANDER McDOWELL LEAVITT, D.D., LL.D.]

“The Society of the Sons of the American Revolution rests on a wider basis than military rank and service. Pen and voice may be as useful to liberty as the sword. By essay and oration Henry, Adams and Jefferson accomplished as much for their country as Gates or Green or Putnam by the most brilliant exploits of battle. Washington as commander, was no more a patriot and benefactor than Washington as president. Nor must the heroes of the ranks be overlooked. Descendants of the sailor, soldier and civilian are recognized by our society; membership is based on true patriotic service, however and wherever rendered, during the war of the Revolution.

“Two paths open to our society:

“It may live in and for the past, it may collect and treasure relics, trace ancestors and extol the heroic era of our nation. Many naturally look behind rather than before for the golden age of our humanity; and let us not discourage those inclined to venerable fashions.

“But we have a nobler mission than devotion to the antique and æsthetic. As our society grows out of the past of our country, so it may become a potent element in the future.

“Our country has been exempt from the peculiar trials of other lands. Humanity began with us anew. The Atlantic is the barrier between us and the past; hence on our soil liberty had an unimpeded growth. New obstacles gave new strength. Colonial struggles made our American manhood. The Revolution was our evolution. Nor has growth stopped; we are a century in advance of our ancestors. Our prisons are better;

our schools are better; our colleges are better. Steam and electricity have enlarged our views even more than our means of intercommunication.

“Where then was the glory of our fathers? Rich patriots imperiled wealth and life for liberty. Poor citizens, through rags and blood and hunger and defeat, stood by the cause until victory was won. States quarreled and delayed their quotas. Congress was sometimes divided and uncertain; cabals and ambitions and dishonesties were not wanting; but always there were men faithful to their leaders and their country. Valor and virtue triumphed. Hard experience made successful both revolution and constitution. Greece, Rome and England instructed our fathers; but American needs and trials were their best teachers. Measured by truest tests their patriotic wisdom has never been excelled. Out of bitter and paltry contests emerged a structure of liberty to endure forever. Amid cramping and belittling influences our constitution was shaped into a comprehensive instrument adapted to social needs, political requirements and territorial magnitudes of which its framers could have had no conception. For all time and all the world it stands their immortal monument.

“Let our society study the work of our fathers as it is—it wants no glamour of a golden mist. When fancy converts our Revolutionary sires into ideals we lose interest. Men, not statues, stir living thoughts. History to be profitable must be honest. Whatever the frailties of others in peace and war, Washington without stain or cloud stands forth in solitary glory.

“Nor should the Sons of the American Revolution forget that from the beginning they had a mingled blood. New England was moulded by the British Puritans. The Dutch controlled New York. Quakers and Germans settled Pennsylvania. English Catholics largely shaped Maryland. Swedes prevailed in Delaware. Virginia boasted cavalier and churchman. The Scotch and Scotch-Irish immigrated extensively into New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia and the Carolinas. Florida was long the home of the Spaniard. In Louisiana, French and Creoles were numerous. Huguenots leavened our whole republic. Our manhood grew from mixed national-

ties. Side by side their representatives fought in the Revolution, and side by side evolved the constitution. To hide these facts is to be ashamed of ourselves. Origin creates our sympathy for humanity, hence in Americans these promises of universal liberty. We do not fear that immigrant nations will cloud or exhaust our sun. Rather we believe that they will diffuse the light until it circles the world. As statesmen we may wisely provide against an overwhelming flood of paupers, criminals and adventurers; but as citizens and christians, we will welcome opportunities of moulding to republicanism and religion those who will be heralds of truth and apostles of the millennium.

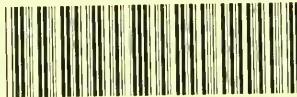
“And this leads to the noblest work of our society. We might specify much to be accomplished by gathering materials for history and souvenirs of the Revolution, by studying men, manners and measures, and by devising the best methods of perpetuating the memories of our ancestors and celebrating their achievements. These, however, will naturally be considered in their time. But one noble field of usefulness should be extended to our view.

“But why confine ourselves to a single country? On our own continent we have fifty republics. Let us form with them leagues of fellowship. Our hearts should embrace self-government throughout the world. The American instinct for freedom is irrepressible; it cannot be restricted by bonds of nationalities. Humanity is its object. We only express and exercise a national impulse when we cultivate fraternity with men everywhere, who, by justice and intelligence, strive to elevate the people from sovereignty and help forward for earth a day of light and love and liberty.”





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